



Announcements from the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy

July 23, 2020

What's New

New Awards for the Radiation Exposure Screening and Education Program (RESEP). Last week, the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy announced nearly \$1.6M awarded to eight organizations in Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Nevada, and Utah. RESEP is a three-year grant program designed to inform and educate the public about radiogenic diseases and provide screening services. The grantees will also provide referrals for medical treatment and assist eligible individuals with documentation under the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act or RECA.

Advance Care Planning: New Realities in Times of COVID-19. Advance care planning (ACP) is decision-making between a care provider and a patient (or their loved ones) about treatment in a sudden medical crisis. A new article in *The Rural Monitor* provides an inside look at the challenges rural clinicians face when ACP is more urgent due to COVID-19.

Rural Philanthropy Response to COVID-19. In a free-access blog post, the publication *Health Affairs* highlights rural-focused philanthropies responding to the COVID-19 pandemic by quickly providing funding specific to rural communities and organizations.

Challenges to Rural Harm Reduction During COVID-19. A new commentary in *The Journal of Rural Health* examines the relationship between substance use and coronavirus in the Southern Mountains region of Appalachia. Authors cite recent data showing greater and faster-increasing COVID-19 rates in Appalachia and the South and rural-specific challenges to programs for overdose prevention and infection control.

CDC Provisional Drug Overdose Death Counts. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) counts the number of overdose deaths in the 12 months prior to July 5, 2020, based on mortality surveillance data in the [National Vital Statistics System](#).

PCORI Research on Rural Transitions from Hospital to Home. The Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) is a non-profit organization that funds projects that involve patients and other healthcare stakeholders throughout the research process. Patients, doctors, and hospital staff from rural Montana helped design this study comparing standard hospital transition support with a new program. Watch a brief video from PCORI on [the importance of including rural populations in research](#).

How Alabama Lowered Its Infant Mortality Rate. The Milbank Foundation examines the strategy that state officials took to bring Alabama's rate for infant mortality drop to 7.0 deaths per 1000 live births in 2018. Part of the strategy incorporated a [Collaborative Innovation Improvement Network](#) supported by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau at the Health Resources and Services Administration.

Federal Office of Rural Health Policy FAQs for COVID-19. A set of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) from our grantees and stakeholders, updated regularly. **New this week:** [Updated FAQs on COVID-19 Testing Funds for Rural Health Clinics](#).

COVID-19 FAQs and Funding for HRSA Programs. Find all funding and frequently asked questions for programs administered by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA).

CDC COVID-19 Updates. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provides daily updates and guidance, and ongoing [Clinician Outreach and Communication Activity \(COCA\)](#). **New this week:** [rural-specific guidance for health care providers, patients, and community-based organizations](#).

Confirmed COVID-19 Cases, Metropolitan and Nonmetropolitan Counties. The RUPRI Center for Rural Health Policy Analysis provides up-to-date data and maps on rural and urban confirmed cases throughout the United States. [An animated map shows the progression of cases beginning January 21](#).

Rural Response to Coronavirus Disease 2019. The Rural Health Information Hub has created a guide to help you learn about activities underway to address COVID-19.

Funding and Opportunities

CDC Partnerships for Emerging and Re-Emerging Infectious Disease Threats – July 31. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) seeks to establish a roster of organizations that would be pre-identified and pre-approved for rapid funding to address emerging and re-emerging public health threats. Eligible applicants include state, local, and tribal governments; public and private institutions of higher education, private businesses, and non-profit organizations. Once established, the list of Approved-But-Unfunded grantees will be used by CDC in support of a set of strategies to control infectious diseases, including COVID-19.

Emergency Funding to Support Meal Programs – July 31. The National Recreation and Park Association provides emergency grants for federal nutrition plans that are at risk of reduced or disrupted operations due to the pandemic. Funding amounts are unspecified and may be used to support operating expenses such as personal protection equipment and cleaning supplies. Eligible applicants include local park and recreation agencies operating open sites, including in-person, grab and go, or pick up models, that serve meals to any and all children in their community under the age of 18 through one of the following three federal nutrition programs: [Summer Food Service Program](#), [Child and Adult Care Food Program](#), and the [National School Lunch](#).

National Health Service Corps New Site Application – Extended to August 4. Health care facilities providing outpatient, ambulatory, and primary health care services in high-need urban and rural areas may still apply to become an approved site for the National Health Service Corps (NHSC). Eligible site types include facilities providing general substance use disorder treatment, a Medication Assisted Treatment program, or an Opioid Treatment Program. Once a facility is an approved site, the NHSC will help hire, recruit, and train clinicians.

American College of Epidemiology Lilienfeld Award – August 15. The award is given in honor of Abraham Lilienfeld, the founder of the American College of Epidemiology, for extraordinary contributions to the field. Eligible nominees are senior leaders in research or scholarship in one of three areas: 1) methods development; 2) etiologic research; or 3) applied epidemiology.

HHS Strengthening Economic Supports for Working Families – August 17. The U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) will make six awards, each up to \$450,000 per year for a three-year demonstration project. Successful applicants are community-level governments and organizations engaged in outreach for the earned income tax credit in communities at higher risk for adverse childhood experiences. The HHS Office of Minority Health created an hour-long [video to assist applicants](#) to this funding opportunity announcement (FOA).

CARES Act Funds for Adult Education and Workforce Preparation – August 24. As part of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act), the U.S. Department of Education will provide funding support for short-term education and training opportunities in states with the highest coronavirus burden. Applicants who missed the July 13 deadline for Notices of Intent to Apply may still submit application through August 24.

NIH Health Services Research on Minority Health and Health Disparities – October 5. The National Institutes of Health will award project grants for research to understand differences that contribute to population-specific health disparities. Participating institutes within NIH include Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, Dental and Craniofacial Research, Drug Abuse, and the National Cancer Institute.

RWJF 2021 Culture of Health Prize – October 15. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation honors collaborative, community-based efforts that prioritize health in marginalized populations. Awards will go to entire communities, not single organizations or initiatives. Eligible nominees include local municipalities, federally-recognized Tribes or state-designated Indian reservations, and communities within U.S. territories.

Policy Updates

Visit the [FORHP Policy page](#) to see all recent updates and send questions to ruralpolicy@rsa.gov.

Deadline Extended: Provider Relief Fund – August 3. Eligible Medicaid, CHIP and Dental providers who had not yet received a payment from the \$50 billion General Distribution have the opportunity to apply for COVID-related relief by August 3, 2020. A final webinar will be held on Monday, July 27 @ 3:00pm ET. [Register here.](#)

Updated FAQs on RHC COVID-19 Testing Funds. Recently, the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy (FORHP) issued an update to its frequently asked questions (FAQs) on COVID-19 Testing Funds for Rural Health Clinics (RHCs). The update addresses questions on the use of funds, insurance payments, links to key information, and other technical details. Technical assistance (TA) for this program is provided by the [National Association of Rural Health Clinics](#) (NARHC) under a cooperative agreement with FORHP, and archived TA webinars are available on the NARHC and [Rural Health Information Hub](#) websites.

Final Rule: Confidentiality of Substance Use Disorder Patient Records. Effective August 14, 2020, this final rule makes changes to the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services' regulations governing these records to facilitate information exchange for safe and effective SUD care, while addressing the legitimate privacy concerns of patients seeking treatment for a SUD.

Learning Events and Technical Assistance

[CDC and NIHB: All Tribes Call](#) – Thursday, July 23 at 1:00 pm ET. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the National Indian Health Board (NIHB) will hold a 90-minute listening session to learn and understand the needs of Tribes and their challenges in addressing COVID-19.

[The Impact of COVID-19 on Transportation Services for Older Adults](#) – Thursday, July 23 at 3:00 pm ET. The National Aging & Disability Transportation Center will discuss operation of volunteer driving programs during the pandemic in an hour-long webinar.

[NAMI: Suicide Prevention for Agricultural Communities](#) – Thursday, July 23 at 4:00 pm ET. The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) and the Upper Midwest Agricultural Safety and Health Center are partnering to provide a 90-minute suicide prevention class tailored to farming communities.

[CDC: Coronavirus and Diabetes](#) – Tuesday, July 28 at 2:00 pm ET. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) will hold an hour-long call to focus on current information about the increased risk for COVID-19 complications in people with diabetes and the importance of diabetes prevention, management, and support. The call is part of the CDC's ongoing [Clinician Outreach and Communication Activity \(COCA\)](#) providing information related to emergency preparedness and response to public health threats.

[Podcast Series for Mid-Level Hospital Managers](#) – Tuesdays through July 28. Produced by The National Rural Health Resource Center, this six-part podcast series was developed by the Small Rural Hospital Transition Project for rural hospital mid-level management (MLMs). Guests feature MLMs from rural hospitals and subject-matter experts. Tune in to learn best practices for leading through the transition to value and population health. New episodes are released every Tuesday through the end of July.

[HHS Telemedicine Hack](#) – Wednesdays at 12:00 pm ET through September 23. The U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) is partnering with the [ECHO Institute](#) at the University of Mexico, and the Public Health Foundation's [TRAIN Learning Network](#) to deliver a 10-week peer-to-peer learning community called Telemedicine Hack to provide knowledge and skills needed to implement video-based telemedicine. All ambulatory providers (e.g., primary care, surgical, rural/urban, dental, mental health, solo practitioners) are invited to participate.

[TRB on Human Trafficking/Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women](#) – Wednesday, July 9 at 2:00 pm. In this 90-minute webinar from the Transportation Research Board (TRB) members of the TRB Standing Committee on Native American Transportation Issues will discuss federal Indian laws and tribal guidelines that may affect human trafficking, identify the social determinants and risk factors of murdered and missing indigenous women, and describe the critical issues of human sex trafficking with regards to tribal jurisdiction.

[VA: COVID-19 Training for Clinicians](#) – Wednesday, July 29 at 2:00 pm ET. The second of two COVID-19 trainings offered by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will discuss potential acute complications of COVID-19 in adults, including central nervous system complications, acute kidney injury, acute liver injury, acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS), and hematologic complications. The trainings are open to VA and non-VA clinicians. Continuing education credit is available for those who preregister in [VHA TRAIN](#).

NIHB: Health Insurance Enrollment for AI/ANs During COVID-19 – Thursday, July 30 at 2:00 pm ET. The National Indian Health Board will hold a 90-minute webinar to educate enrollment assisters available insurance coverage options, benefits, and special federal protections exclusively for American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/ANs).